

Cluster Review – Safer Communities

Attendance at review meeting: Dominic Clout, Dez O'Neill, Caroline O'Donoghue, Helen Kay
NRS ISSUE: 8 Residents want to feel safe on the streets and at home

Date of Review
6th May 2004

Safer Communities

Special Achievements

- Now 30 Police Community Support Officers working alongside police in Colville (and Campden and Earls Court). Project part-funded through NRF. A further 29 to be recruited by July 2005 funded by MPS and local authority.
- Enhanced security for 750 residential and 63 commercial premises with NRF
- Colville ward is part of national pilot for 'Safer Neighbourhoods' initiative which is new model of policing for MPS –more devolved local offices in local areas. As part of the initiative a successful consultation event was held at the Tabernacle, on fear of crime. This identified top priorities of local people and actions for Police. Already fed back to residents with positive results.
- The Council and Police held a major seminar at the Dalgarno Community Centre (key note speak Hazel Blears MP) to publicise the provisions in the new Anti Social Behaviour Act and how they might be used in the local areas. There were practical workshops on this matter and feedback suggest that it was successful in focussing local residents and agencies on ways in which problems can be effectively addressed.

Barriers

Action for Improvement

Possible Solutions

- Partners should pull resources together on small local project. For example, entrance to Latimer Rd tube and environs. KCP could lobby LUL to improve actual entrance, council provide better lighting and re-pave, public art outside tube and/or under arch, police keep special watch on area, etc
- KCP could champion the Safer Neighbourhoods initiative next year

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Special Achievements

- a) Enforcement of Section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972 to evict five prolific crack dealers from a geographical location (postcode). The dealers breached their order and received custodial sentences. K & C were the first borough to use the new legislation in this way. **Highlight Crack Houses initiative in Annual Report**
- b) Safer Surer operations are multi-agency initiatives to reassure local residents, detect and prevent crime and improve quality of life. Two operations have been carried out and key successes included: seizure of illegal alcohol, identification of drivers with untaxed vehicles, seizure of firearms and fines for fare evaders on public transport. **Highlight as new initiative in K&C**
- c) The 'Stay Safe' week for the over 50s took place in March from the deck of a special police 'reassurance' bus. The week was organised by Community Safety team, Police and Voluntary sector. The bus visited sheltered homes, day centres and community groups in the borough, providing crime prevention and fire safety information to over 350 people. Could be developed further with continued voluntary sector input.
- d) The Community Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team (CASBAT) has secured 7 ASBOs. The Team have utilised powers under Section 1 of the ASB Act 2003 to close 'crack houses'. They secured an ASBO against a hotel burglar to prevent him from entering a guesthouse, hotel or other commercial premises for paid, short term residence anywhere in Greater London. They also obtained an interim ASBO within three hours of receiving a complaint from a local housing provider.
- e) 30 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are now working alongside the police in Earl's Court, Colville and Campden. The Local Authority have identified funds to enhance this provision with an additional 15 PCSOs **Highlight in Annual Report - also as an example of mainstreaming through NRF**

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Barriers

FUNDING.

Continuance of short term funding makes planning very difficult and encourages boroughs to focus on quick wins as opposed to dealing with long-term problems. The capital/revenue split requirements for Building safer Communities (BSC) is difficult to meet as most capital expenditure takes place at the outset of a project. Many of the projects currently funded have been in receipt of Home Office funding for a number of years. Placing restrictions on funding can lead to boroughs funding work that is not necessarily a priority. Allocating all funds at the beginning of the year prevents boroughs tackling emerging crime problems.

SECTION 17

There continues to be a lack of knowledge/understanding of Section 17 amongst some partner agencies. It is difficult to assess the application of this section of the Act as there does not seem to have been a test case.

PRESCRIBED PRIORITIES

The allocation of resources for the prescribed 'core crime' priorities by the Home Office can make it difficult for the police to engage on work within other areas of the Strategy when there is an increase in one of the core crimes.

Possible solutions

Funding issues flagged up with the Home Office but although they recognise this is a problem they are restricted by guidelines set down by the ministry.

Developments in partnership working should address the problems associated with the lack of application of Section 17.

Although the Government places an emphasis on core crime (burglary, robbery and motor vehicle crime) we can allocate external funds to other themes within the Community Safety Strategy.

Action for improvement

K&C is now classified as a high crime area. The increase in crime on Notting Dale sector has almost certainly contributed to this fact. Tackling crime on this Sector will assist in addressing this issue.

Future Considerations

Look at 'secondary benefits' of anti-social behaviour initiatives and police work, i.e. what other partners are getting out of it. For example, if close noisy pub and stop fights on Saturday night, helps decrease noise complaints and A&E casualties. Example 2: PCSO's may have decreased cleaning up graffiti. Could put monetary value on these secondary benefits.

Local Authority and Community Safety Team could be working together more effectively. In long-term this may involve re-organisation of teams to focus on initiatives such as anti-social behaviour, e.g. Noise and Nuisance team re-locates to Community Safety Team so both together.